

Pianist Jarvis returns to share his passion with a hometown crowd



By Brock Weir

Music is the passion that fuels the fire in Harrison Jarvis and growing up in Aurora he had plenty of people to stoke the flames. Whether it was the guiding hand of a local music teacher who set him on his path, or a community member taking in his talent donating her grand piano to the budding artist so he had something to practice on worthy of his talent, his career so far has been a local success story. And next Wednesday, he's back in Aurora to play for the community that nurtured his talent from his earliest days.

Jarvis, now a student at Bard College Conservatory in New York, will hold a concert at the Aurora Cultural Centre this Wednesday, June 7.

Featuring the works of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy and Schumann, Mr. Jarvis says he is looking forward to sharing his favourite pieces with his hometown.

"Aurora has been an incredible community to me, growing up here and musically," he says. "I took piano from Stan Cyprys here in Aurora for nine years and he was such a generous teacher and really cared a lot about my growth. I also had Geri Adam who literally donated her grand piano to me so I could have a good instrument to practice on.

"There are so many countless examples of the community in Aurora really helping me develop as an artist and I wouldn't be anywhere that I am today without them. I really thought it would be fun to come back and get to play a concert and share music with the people who helped me so much."

When The Auroran last checked in with Harrison in 2015, he was vying for a spot in CBC's Piano Hero competition. He was bolstered along the way by Mr. Cyprys's guiding hand and able to hone his talent on Ms. Adam's piano, which she donated after first hearing him play and learning that his family simply couldn't afford a grand piano.

"It is pretty critical for a pianist to have a grand piano to practice on because the action is so different," he explains. "When she told me she wanted to donate it to me I was completely bewildered!

I still kind of can't believe it, it was an enormous help to me, and I just improved so much because of it."

From that CBC competition, he has performed at New York City's Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center. Since then, he says he has been "thrilled" to be able to study with Benjamin Hochman at Bard College where he is taking a double degree in psychology and piano performance.

He's happy to be home, however, and is preparing a program for next Wednesday designed to take you through the whole human experience.

"There is a rich literature in music and I don't think people have as much exposure to it as they might have had in the past," says Harrison. "This concert is a good way to share some incredible music with people and I hope they get to experience all the sorrow, tragedy, excitement and ecstasy that is found in the music that I am playing.

?I just have a profound love of music. If I go for a few days practicing or a few days without listening to music I actually go a little insane! There is really nothing else in the world I love doing more than playing the piano. It is just my passion. I love to spend time practicing my instrument, exploring the incredible compositions I get to learn and continuing my relationship.?

To experience Harrison Jarvis this Wednesday, June 7 at the Aurora Cultural Centre, the concert gets underway at 7.30 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students and seniors, and available at harrisonjarvis.eventbrite.ca. Proceeds from ticket sales will support his summer studies and performances at Orford Musique in Quebec and Klaviersommer in Cochem, Germany.